

CLAIMS

1. A gang type lawn mower system adapted to be pulled behind a tractor, comprising:
 - a. a wheel supported main frame;
 - b. a power source mounted on the main frame;
 - c. at least two mower decks connected to the main frame, each mower deck having a rotary blade;
 - d. each mower deck being movably mounted to the main frame and movable from an operative lowered position where the mower deck is operative to cut grass to an elevated stowed position where at least a portion of the mower deck overlies a portion of the main frame; and
 - e. a drive interconnected between the power source and each of the mower decks for driving each of the mower decks whereby the mower decks are driven by a single power source mounted on the main frame.
2. The gang type lawn mower of claim 1 wherein the main frame lies between two mower decks, and wherein in the lowered operative position the mower decks extend outwardly from the main frame;
 - a. wherein the main frame does not include a blade for cutting grass; and
 - b. each mower deck being pivotally connected along one side of the main frame such that when the mower deck assumes a stowed position; the underside of the mower deck faces at least partially upwardly and the entire mower deck is supported by the main frame.

3. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 2 wherein in moving from the operative position to the stowed position each of the mower decks move through an angle of at least 91°.

4. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 1 wherein the drive interconnected between the power source and the mower decks include a belt drive; and wherein the gang type lawn mower system includes a belt tensioner for maintaining a tension on the belt drive.

5. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 4 wherein the belt tensioner is secured to the main frame and extends outwardly therefrom where the belt tensioner is operatively connected to the mower decks.

6. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 4 wherein the belt tensioner includes a spring biased telescoping assembly that tends to bias a portion of the mower decks outwardly from the main frame.

7. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 4 wherein the belt tensioner includes a telescoping sleeve assembly.

8. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 7 wherein the telescoping sleeve assembly includes a sleeve, a member slidably contained within the sleeve, a spring contained within the sleeve for engaging the slidable member and biasing the slidable member outwardly, and wherein the slidable member is operatively connected to one of the mower decks such that the spring tends to bias the mower deck at least slightly outward so as to maintain the belt drive in tension.

9. The gang type lawn mower of claim 8 wherein the sleeve extends across the main frame and includes a pair of slidable members and a pair of springs with each spring being

engaged with one of the slidable members for biasing the slidable member outwardly and wherein each of the slidable members is connected to one of the mower decks.

10. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 1 wherein the main frame includes at least two spaced apart caster wheels disposed on the front portion of the main frame.

11. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 1 including at least one belt guard extending from the main frame over a portion of one mower deck for guarding a belt drive that forms a part of the drive interconnected between the power source and the mower decks.

12. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 11 wherein the belt guard is pivotally mounted to the main frame and extends outwardly therefrom over a portion of the belt drive.

13. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 11 wherein each mower deck can move relative to the main frame and wherein the belt guard is operative to limit the movement of the mower deck.

14. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 13 wherein the belt guard limits the movement of the mower deck to an angle of approximately 15° with respect to the main frame.

15. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 11 wherein there is provided at least two belt guards with each belt guard being pivotally connected to the main frame and extending outwardly therefrom over a portion of an adjacent mower deck and wherein each belt guard includes a first section that extends outwardly from the main frame and a second section that turns at an angle with respect to the first section such that the belt guard assumes a generally L-shaped configuration.

16. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 1 wherein the main frame includes an upper platform having the power source mounted thereon.

17. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 16 wherein the power source includes a drive shaft extending downwardly beneath the upper platform and wherein the drive shaft has secured thereon a pair of drive sheaves that drive a belt drive that transfers torque from the drive shaft of the power source to a pair of drive shafts associated with the mower decks.

18. A gang type lawn mower system adapted to be pulled behind a tractor, comprising:

- a. a power source frame adapted to attach to the tractor and having an area for receiving and supporting an internal combustion engine thereon;
- b. an internal combustion engine mounted on the power source frame and having an output power shaft extending therefrom;
- c. the power source frame having a plurality of wheels and a pair of opposed side areas;
- d. at least two mower decks movably mounted to the power source frame, each mower deck movably mounted to one side area of the power source frame such that the power source frame lies between the two mower decks and wherein each mower deck is operative to move independently of the power source frame;
- e. each mower deck having a blade associated therewith for cutting grass;
- f. a drive extending from the power source frame to each of the mower decks and wherein the drive transfers power from the internal combustion engine to each of the mower decks so as to drive the blades associated with the mower decks;

- g. each mower deck being movable with respect to the power source frame from a lowered operative position for cutting grass to an elevated stowed position;
- h. wherein in the elevated stowed position each mower deck is turned at least partially on the mower deck's side such that an underside of the mower deck faces outwardly or at least slightly upwardly; and
- i. wherein the mower decks are exclusively driven by the internal combustion engine mounted on the power source frame that in operation trails the tractor.

19. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 18 wherein each mower deck is pivotally connected to one side of the power source frame through one or more pivot connections that permit each mower deck to swing about a longitudinal axis that extends adjacent the side area of the power source frame.

20. The gang type lawn mower system of claim 19 including a belt tensioner assembly mounted to the power source frame and extending outwardly therefrom for connection to each of the mower decks and wherein the belt tensioner assembly tends to bias each of the mower decks outwardly; and wherein the drive interconnected between the power source frame and the mower decks comprises a belt drive.